A

SERMON

PREACHED at

White-Hall,

Before the

QUEEN,

On the 17th of *June*, 1691,

BEING THE

FAST-DAY.

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On the 27th of June, 1713.

BEING THE

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Lxxvii Pſalm 10, 11, 12.

And I ſaid, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the moſt High.

I will remember the works of the Lord: ſurely I will remember thy wonders of old.

I will meditate alſo of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.

THE Pſalmiſt, at the penning of this Pſalm, was oppreſſed with very black and deſponding Thoughts: The ſtate of the Church ſeems to have been very calamitous, they had been ſo long and ſo grievouſly afflicted, that he began to queſtion, whether God would ever be merciful to them again: *Will the Lord caſt off for ever: and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promiſe fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?*

But in my Text he recollects himself, confesses his Wickedness and Sin in giving the least entertainment to such unworthy Thoughts of God, as if he could forget his Promise and Covenant, which he had made to their Fathers *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, *This is my infirmity*; want of Faith and Trust in God's Promises: and to cure this Diffidence, to revive his dying Hopes, and to confirm his Faith in God, he calls to mind those glorious Deliverances which God had wrought for his Church, and his People *Israel* in former Ages: *I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High*; those days when God did so visibly deliver *Israel* with his own right hand; as it follows 14, 15 Verses, *Thou art the God that doest wonders*; *thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.* And instances in those miraculous Deliverances in *Ægypt*, the Red Sea, and the Wilderness, as a reason and foundation of a firm Faith and Trust in God in all Ages; these are those Works of the Lord, and Wonders of Old, which he will remember, which he will meditate, and talk of, with which he will support his Spirit, whatever Dangers seem to threaten the final Ruin and Desolation of the

Church; which is the Argument of the 80 *Pſalm* 14, 15. *Return, we beſeech thee, O God of hoſts: look down from heaven, and behold and viſit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madeſt ſtrong for thy ſelf.*

That God had made a Covenant with *Abraham*, and choſe his Seed and Poſterity for his peculiar People; that he had delivered them out of *Ægypt* by a mighty hand, and an out ſtretched arm; that he had given them paſſage through the Red Sea, and fed them in the Wilderneſs forty Years; that he had fought their Battles for them, and given them poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*, as he had promiſed to their Fathers; that he had in all ſucceeding Ages protected them by a viſible Providence, raiſed up Judges and Saviours to deliver them out of the hands of their Enemies, when they cried to him; this was a ſure foundation of their Faith and Hope, that God would not utterly caſt off his People, but though for their ſins, he might deliver them into the hands of their Enemies, yet when they repented of their Evil Ways, and returned unto God, God alſo would return, and be merciful unto them.

And this is the wiſeſt courſe we can take, whatever Troubles we ſuffer, whatever we fear, whatever our Sins have deſerved, whatever our Enemies threaten, *To remember the works of the Lord, and his wonders of old, to meditate of all his works, and to talk of his doings.*

And this is what I at preſent intend, to make ſuch Remarks on the Providence of God towards the *Jewiſh* Church, not omitting the experience the Chriſtian Church has had of the ſame kind, and watchful Providence, as may be of preſent uſe to us, both to direct us what we muſt do, and to give us a firm Hope and Truſt in God's Mercy; for God is always the ſame under all the Diſpenſations of his Grace and Providence; and as the *Jewiſh* Church was a Type of the Chriſtian, ſo God's Providence towards them, aſſures us, what we may expect in like Circumſtances, or elſe the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament would be of very little uſe to us now, whereas St. *Paul* tells us, *That theſe things happened to them for enſamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come*, 1 Cor. 10, 11. But what difference there is between their State and ours, and how far we are concerned in the Examples, I ſhall diſtinctly obſerve

obſerve under the ſeveral Particulars, as there is occaſion for it:

I. Firſt then I obſerve as St. *Paul* did, *That the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*, 11. Rom. 29. God having made a Covenant with *Abraham*, and choſen his Seed for his peculiar People, whatever their Provocations were, he would never wholly caſt them off; he many times very ſeverely puniſhed them, delivered them into the hands of their Enemies, who oppreſſed them, the *Aramites*, and *Moabites*, and *Ægyptians*, and *Aſſyrians*, and at laſt into the hands of *Nebucadnezar*, who deſtroyed their City and Temple, and carried them captive into *Babylon*, where they continued ſeventy Years, and then they returned into their own Country, and rebuilt their Temple and City, and ſo continued till in puniſhment of their great Sin in crucifying their *Meſſias*, and for their obſtinate Infidelity, they were finally deſtroyed by the *Romans*, and diſperſed into all Nations, and have never been a Nation ſince; that is, till Chriſt came, who was the promiſed Seed, in whom all the Nations of the World are bleſſed, as St. *Paul* proves, 3 *Gal.* 16. *To Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes*

miſes made: He ſaith not, Unto ſeeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt. I ſay till Chriſt, who was the promiſed Seed, and typified by *Iſaac*, came, the carnal Poſterity of *Abraham*, deſcending from *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, were the Typical *Iſrael*, and God's peculiar People, and viſible Church on Earth, and all this while God never wholly caſt them off; but when Chriſt came, then the Promiſe was eſtabliſhed to the ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraham*, thoſe who are the Children of *Abraham* by Faith in Chriſt, as the Apoſtle proves in the ſame place, 6, 7, 8, 9. and in ſeveral other places: And this is the Anſwer, which the Apoſtle gives to that terrible Objection againſt Chriſt's being the *Meſſias*, and God's owning the Chriſtian Church for his peculiar and elect People, as formerly he did the *Jews*; that then God's Promiſe to *Abraham* and his Seed fails: His anſwer is, That the Promiſe to *Abraham* and his Seed, was meant of Chriſt, and his ſpiritual Seed, thoſe who are the Children of *Abraham* by Faith in Chriſt; as he proves at large in the 9, 10, 11 Chapters to the *Romans*; though he gives another anſwer to this too, That though the Promiſes do no longer belong to *Abraham*'s carnal Seed, yet God ſo far remembers his Covenant with *Abraham*

ham and his carnal Seed, that he has not wholly caſt them off, but will in time engraft them into his Church again by Faith in Chriſt: *For out of Sion ſhall come the deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob.* But I cannot enlarge on this now.

To apply this then to the times of the Goſpel: We certainly learn from God's Care of the *Jewiſh* Church, that God will always preſerve and protect the Chriſtian Church, that the true Faith of Chriſt, and his true and ſincere Worſhippers ſhall never wholly fail in the World, as Chriſt promiſes, That *the gates of hell ſhall not prevail* againſt his Church: for God eſtabliſhed an everlaſting Covenant with *Abraham* and his Seed, that is, with Chriſt, and the Chriſtian Church, who are the true ſpiritual Seed of *Abraham*, to whom the Promiſes belong; and if God ſo punctually performed his Promiſe to the carnal Seed of *Abraham*, while they were to be his viſible Church until Chriſt came, who was the promiſed Seed, we learn by that Example, how he will protect, defend, and ſupport the Chriſtian Church to the end of the World; till Chriſt the promiſed Seed return again to Judge the World, to put an end to all Things, and

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to receive his Church into the Kingdom of his Father.

To this we owe the Continuance and Preſervation of the Chriſtian Church to this Day, amidſt all the Dangers which have threatned its final Ruin; when the Church is toſſed on the foaming Billows of this World, like the Ship into which Chriſt and his Diſciples entred: 8 *Matth.* 23, 24, 25. When *there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea, inſomuch that the ſhip was covered with the waves; and Chriſt was aſleep, and his diſciples came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Lord, ſave us; we periſh. And he ſaith unto them, Why are ye ſo fearful, O ye of little faith? then he aroſe and rebuked the wind and the ſea, and there was a great calm.* This was a Figure and Emblem of the condition the Church is very often in in this World: for moſt of our Saviour's Miracles had ſome ſpiritual ſignifications in them: His curing the Halt, and Blind, and Lame, and Deaf, repreſented his Diviner Power in curing the Diſeaſes and Diſtempers of our Souls, in making the Blind to ſee, and the Deaf to hear, and the Lame to walk; and therefore when he cured the Man that was born blind, he turned his Diſcourſe to ſpiritual Blindneſs, 9 *John* 39, 40, 41. When he had fed that great Multi-

Multitude with a few loaves and ſmall Fiſhes, he diſcourſes to them of that Bread that comes down from Heaven, and will nouriſh them unto Eternal Life, and which he only could give them, 6 *John*, when he diſcourſed with *Martha* about raiſing her Brother *Lazarus* from the Dead, he preaches to her his Divine Power to raiſe dead Souls as well as dead Bodies, into immortal Life, 11 *John* 25, 26. When the Diſciples at Chriſt's command had caſt their Net into the Sea, [after having toiled all night and taken nothing] and encompaſſed a great multitude of Fiſhes, he tells them the meaning of it, that he would make them Fiſhers of Men. Thus here Chriſt's rebuking the Wind and Sea, which were ready to ſwallow up the Ship, wherein he and his Diſciples were, is a Figure of the State of the Church in this World, and of his Readineſs to Protect it: How threatning ſoever the Dangers are, Chriſt is in the Ship, and all the Powers of the World, how much ſoever they rage and foam, can never ſwallow up that Ship, wherein Chriſt is, unleſs they can ſwallow Him up too: and though he may ſeem to be aſleep, and to take no notice of the Sufferings and Dangers of his

Church, yet the importunate Prayers and Cries of his Diſciples will awake him, and then he will ariſe to their defence, and huſh the Winds and Seas into a Calm.

This the Church had frequent experience of under the Pagan Perſecutions, which raged with Fire and Sword, and all the witty Arts of Cruelty; when nothing would ſerve but the final Extirpation of the Name of Chriſtians: But how often did Chriſt rebuke the Wind and Sea, and reſtore profound Peace and Reſt to his Chuch? What a glorious Triumph did he give his Church over the laſt and moſt terrible Efforts of the Pagan Powers, when he raiſed *Conſtantine* into the Throne, and made the Empire Chriſtian?

And this is a very comfortable Conſideration to us at this time: The Proteſtant Churches which profeſs the Pure and Uncorrupt Faith and Worſhip of Chriſt, as to all the eſſentials of Faith and Worſhip, have now for many Years groaned under the Antichriſtian Tyranny and Perſecutions, and now at laſt, and I hope it may be the laſt, as it is the moſt terrible Inſult of the Anti-chriſtian Powers, a Great and Mighty Prince bends his whole Force to root out the Proteſtant Name, as well as to Uſurp upon the

the Liberties of *Europe*: What he has done in his own Country, and where-ever his Power and Influence reached, I need not tell you: From ſome of his Subjects he has forced away their Faith; others to keep their Faith have loſt their Eſtates, their Liberty, their Country, their Lives.

What danger we were in at Home, we all ſaw and felt not long ſince, though ſome Men would now perſwade us, it was but a Dream; but it was a very terrible Dream, if it was one, and thanks be to God that we are awakened out of it, and may we never fall into ſuch frightful Slumbers more; or rather let us neither be lulled aſleep, nor dream awake, leſt theſe frightful Dreams prove Realities at laſt.

For ſhould that mighty Monarch prevail, and like an irreſiſtible Torrent bear all before him; as ſome kind Friends to the Liberties of *Europe*, and the Proteſtant Name and Intereſt, wiſh and pray he may; it requires not a Spirit of Propheſy, to foretel what will become of Proteſtants: But our Hope and Truſt is in God, that the true Chriſtian Faith ſhall never be rooted out; and

I am as certainly perſwaded, that the Proteſtant Faith and Worſhip, as to the Eſſentials of it, and as oppoſed to Popery, is the true Chriſtian Faith and Worſhip, as I am of the truth and certainty of Chriſtianity itſelf: and when I remember by what little beginnings, and weak and contemptible means, GOD ſpread the true Light of the Goſpel over great part of the *European* World, when it was covered with the *Ægyptian* Darkneſs, and oppreſſed by the Unſupportable Tyranny of Popery; notwithſtanding all the Follies, Diviſions and Miſcarriages of Proteſtants, I cannot fear, that God will cauſe our Sun to ſet again, and that he will finally remove his Goſpel from us; and that gives great reaſon to hope, that he will check the Pride and Ambition, and put a ſtop to the Succeſſes of a Prince, who glories in the Extirpation of his Proteſtant Subjects, and at once enſlaves both the Bodies and the Souls of Men; who challenges as abſolute a Dominion over the Faith, as over the Eſtates of his Vaſſals, to fill his Exchequer and Purgatory together. This I am ſure, we ought heartily to beg of God in our moſt ſolemn Prayers and Faſts; and thoſe who

who ſcruple this, if they underſtand themſelves, muſt never ſay the Lord's Prayer more, wherein our Saviour has taught us to pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, which thoſe who wiſh ſucceſs to Perſecuting and Antichriſtian Powers, do not and cannot pray.

II. I obſerve farther, That as God's Covenant with *Abraham* and his Poſterity, was ſure and ſtedfaſt, that no provocations could ever tempt him utterly to deſtroy them, ſo he never inflicted any publick Judgments and Calamities on them, but when he was greatly provoked by their Sins. This was God's expreſs Covenant with them, 26 *Levit.* That *if they walked in his ſtatutes, and kept his commandments*, then he would beſtow all Temporal Bleſſings on them, Rain in its ſeaſon, and the encreaſe of their Land, in Corn, and Wine, and Oyl; Peace at home, and Victory abroad, and his ſpecial Preſence and Favour: *I will ſet my tabernacle amongſt you; and my ſoul ſhall not abhor you, and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you ſhall be my people.* But if they would not hearken unto him, and would not do all his Commandments, then he threatens all ſorts of Evils ſhould befal them, ſickneſs of Body, to flie

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before their Enemies, the unfruitfulneſs and barrenneſs of their Land, that they ſhall be a prey to wild Beaſts, that the Sword ſhall devour them, and they ſhall be enſlaved to their Enemies, and buy their own Bread of them; that they ſhould ſuffer Famine to ſuch extremity, as to eat their owns Sons and Daughters, that he would lay waſt their Cities, and make their Country deſolate; and carry them away captive into foreign Countries, as you may ſee at large in that Chapter: This was his Covenant with them; and this he punctually obſerved: whenever they did obey him, they were a happy and proſperous People, their Enemies crouched before them, they injoyed Plenty and Peace, enlarged their Borders, and made their Neighbours Subjects and Tributaries to them; and tho' God did not always puniſh them according to their deſerts, yet he never did inflict any publick or national Judgments on them, but when they were grown very corrupt and wicked in their manners; as it were eaſie to ſhew from the Hiſtory of thoſe Times, and all the remarkable Judgments God inflicted on them.

Now, I muſt confeſs, when we apply this to the Chriſtian Church, the caſe is very different, for God has not ſo expreſly covenanted with

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the Chriſtian Church for external Peace and Proſperity, as he did with the *Jews*; they were the carnal Seed and Poſterity of *Abraham*, Heirs of an earthly *Canaan* and external Proſperity, but the ſpiritual Seed of *Abraham* are Heirs of ſpiritual and eternal Bleſſings, which were typified by the carnal Promiſes made to the *Jewiſh* Church: the Chriſtian Church was founded in the Sufferings of our Lord; the Chriſtian Faith was at firſt propagated by the courage, patience, and ſufferings of the Apoſtles, and the Primitive Martyrs and Confeſſors: The Terms our Saviour propoſes to us are, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me: He that loveth his life, ſhall loſe it, but he that loſeth his life for my ſake ſhall find it*: And therefore the moſt ſincere Believers, and moſt exemplary Chriſtians, may ſuffer very ſeverely in this World, and their ſupport and comfort is, that they ſhall be proportionably rewarded in the next: this was the great Objection the *Jews* made againſt Chriſtians being the Sons and peculiar People of God, that they were hated and perſecuted for the Faith of Chriſt, and God ſuffered them to be ſo; whereas he had promiſed all Temporal Proſperity to the obſervance of his Laws and Statutes; and if believing in Chriſt had been the

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Will and Commandment of God, he would certainly have made good all the Promiſes of their Law to the Diſciples of Jeſus: An Objection which very much troubled many believing *Jews* themſelves, who did not thoroughly underſtand the difference between the *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian Diſpenſation, between the Law of *Moſes*, and the Goſpel of Chriſt, and therefore is particularly anſwered by St. *Paul*, 8 *Rom.* and in the 7 *Heb.*

But this ſhews, that their Faith and Worſhip of Chriſt is not always rewarded with external Proſperity, and we muſt not expect it ſhould be, and conſequently that very ſevere Sufferings and Perſecutions may befal Chriſtians, not always for the correction and puniſhment of their Sins, but for the trial of their Faith and Patience, to make them conformed to their Suffering Head, to prepare them for richer and brighter Crowns, to convince and convert their Perſecutors, and to propagate the Chriſtian Faith in the World. Though it is obſerved by ſome of the Ancient Fathers, and particularly by St. *Cyprian*, That God never ſent a general Perſecution upon the Chriſtian Church, but when their Sins, the general declenſion of Piety and Diſcipline, their Worldly Mindedneſs, the formality and coldneſs of their Devotions called for a Scourge.

Thus

Thus it was with the Church, while it ſojourned, as I may ſo ſpeak, in the world, as in a ſtrange land, had no place of its own, no earthly Power and Authority to ſupport it, but lived under Pagan Powers, was intermixt with them, and oppreſſed by them, when they pleaſed; but the caſe of a Chriſtian Nation, where the Power and Authority is Chriſtian, ſeems very different, and to come nearer the ſtate of the *Jewiſh* Church; for God does not uſe to inflict Publick Judgments and Calamities upon Nations, but for the Puniſhment of ſome Publick and National Sins: And, therefore a Chriſtian Nation, which profeſſes the True Faith and Worſhip of Chriſt, preſerves the Reverence of Religion, corrects and ſuppreſſes Vice, may expect to be bleſſed with all external Proſperity; *for righteouſneſs exalteth a nation*; it does ſo in its natural tendency and effects, and it does ſo by the Bleſſing of God; and therefore when God brings any Publick Judgments upon a Nation profeſſing the true Faith of Chriſt, we have reaſon to take notice of God's Anger and Diſpleaſure; to inquire what is amiſs among us; what that accurſed thing is, which hath provoked God to Jealouſie, and made him take the Rod into his hand. We have then reaſon to humble our ſelves before God, to deprecate his Anger and Diſpleaſure; to turn

from all the evil of our ways, that he may return, and be merciful to us.

But there is one thing worth observing, which may be matter of Hope and Comfort to us at this time, That God never delivered the *Jewish* Church into the hands of their Enemies to oppress them, never carried them away into Captivity, excepting the last Destruction of *Jerusalem*, in Punishment of their Sin in Crucifying their Messias, but only when they were guilty of Idolatry: A Corruption of Manners might bring other Judgments upon them; but it was generally, and I think always, for their Idolatry, that God made their Enemies rule over them, and carried them captive into a Strange land. This we have a summary account of, *Judges* 2. how that after the Death of *Joshua* and those Elders who had seen all that God did for them, *they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and God deliver'd them into the hands of spoilers, who spoiled them*, v. 11, 12, &c. For this Sin of Idolatry, the Ten Tribes were carried away into a Perpetual Captivity, and *Judah* carried captive to *Babylon*, which they were threatned with by the Prophets, for their *Whoredoms*, that is, their Idolatries, 2, 4, 5. chapt. of *Hosea*; and this is the account the Prophet *Jeremy* gives of it, *like as ye*

have

have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land which is not yours, 5 Jer. 19.

Now in proportion to God's dealing with the *Jewish* Church, we have reason to hope, That though a Church and Nation which professes the true Faith and Worship of Christ, may be severely punished for their other Sins, yet while they preserve themselves clean from Spiritual Fornication, from all Antichristian Idolatries, God will not Un-Church them, nor deliver them finally up into the Power of Idolatrous Oppressors: I am sure we of this Nation, ever since the Reformation of Religion among us, though God has made us smart severely for our other Sins, have yet always found a watchful Providence defending us from all Attempts, though contrived with Art and Skill, and backed with Power, to reduce us again under the *Roman* Yoke. May the same Good Providence still watch over us, and defend us, and neither suffer our Popish Enemies to rejoice over us, nor deluded Protestants to make dangerous and fatal Experiments.

3*dly*. When God did think fit to correct his People, he always kept the Rod in his own hand, and prescribed the Measures and Continuance of their Sufferings. This is so plain, from all the Promises and Threatnings of the Law, and from

the Examples of God's Providence towards *Israel*, that there is no need to multiply particular Instances: There was no Good nor Evil befel *Israel*, but by a particular Providence; God inflicted Judgments on them when he saw fit, and he removed them again; He gave Commission to Plague, and Sword, and Famine, which they could not exceed. In the 26. *Levit.* we may observe, That God proportion'd his Judgments to their Sins. When their Sins were grown so Publick and National, as to deserve some Publick Judgments, yet at first God threatens them with some more light and gentle Punishments; but if they continued incorrigible, he tells them he had more terrible Judgments in reserve for them; which proves, That God determines the Kinds, Degrees, and Continuance of his Judgments. When *David* for his sin in Numbring the People, had that hard Choice given him, *of seven years famine, or to flee three months before his enemies, or three days pestilence*; he answers, *Let me fall now into the hands of the Lord, (for his mercies are great) and let me not fall into the hand of man*, 2 Sam. 24. 14. That is, he chose Pestilence before the Sword; for Pestilence is God's immediate hand; and tho the Sword be God's Judgment too, yet it is put into the hands of men, who gratifie their own Lust and Rage, and Revenge with it. And yet, tho God

God leaves more to man in this, than in any other Judgments, he does not put the Sword wholly out of his own hands, when he puts it into the hands of men, but gives Laws to it; as appears from the example of the King of *Assyria*, whom God sent against *Jerusalem*, *To take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the street. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations, not a few: Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion,* (what he himself, not what the King of *Assyria* intended to do), *I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks*, 10 Isa. 5, 6, 7,----12.

Now God has the same tender care of a Christian Nation, that he had of *Israel*; He mingles our Cup for us, he prescribes what we shall suffer, and how long: and he corrects as a Father, not to destroy, but to reform; and this is a mighty comfort, that whatever men threaten, we are in the hands of God, who has the Winds and Seas at his command, *who giveth Salvation to Kings, who delivereth David his Servant from the hurtful Sword*, Psal. 144. 10. The most powerful Oppressors are but the Rod of God's Anger; the more fierce and savage Instruments God employs

ploys to correct us, we may conclude, the more angry God is; but whatever the Rod is, it is God that ſtrikes, who knows when to ſtrike, and when to ſpare: We never have any reaſon to be afraid of men, whatever their Power, how great ſoever their Rage and Vengeance be; but ought to pray to God as the Prophet does, *O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, leſt thou bring me to nothing*, Jer. 10. 24. *O Lord rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chaſten me in thy ſore diſpleaſure; have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak, O Lord heal me, for my bones are vexed*, Pſal. 6. 1, 2. or as it is in *Pſal.* 56. 1, 2, 3. *Be merciful to me, O God, for man would ſwallow me up, he fighting daily oppreſſeth me; mine enemies would daily ſwallow me up, for they be many that riſe up againſt me, O thou moſt High. What time I am afraid, I will truſt in Thee; in God I will praiſe his word; in God I have put my truſt, I will not fear what fleſh can do unto me.*

4thly, When God does think fit to correct his People, yet he always removes his Judgments upon their ſincere Repentance: This was God's expreſs Covenant with *Iſrael*, 26. *Levit.* 40, 41, 42. *If they ſhall confeſs their iniquity, and the iniquity of their Fathers, with the treſpaſs which they treſpaſſed againſt me; and alſo that they have walked contrary to me, and that I alſo have walked contrary to them,*

them, and have brought them into the Land of their Enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquities, then will I remember my Covenant with Jacob, *and also my Covenant with* Isaac, *and also my Covenant with* Abraham *will I remember, and I will remember the land.*

Thus in the time of the Judges, when God for their sins delivered them into the hands of their Enemies, when they cried to God, he raised up Saviours for them: Nay, many times, when their repentance was not very sincere, nor lasting, yet in great goodness and compassion he spared them: *When he slew them, then they sought him, and returned, and inquired early after God; and they remembred that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer; nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongue, for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant; but he being full of compassion forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not; yea many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath; for he remembred that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again,* 78 Psalm 34, *&c.*

So that how angry soever God be, we have a certain way of appeasing his anger. Nothing but sin can provoke a merciful God, and a compassionate

passionate Father to punish; He has a great tenderness for all his Creatures; *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*; and therefore he is more easily appeased, than he is provoked; Judgment is his strange work, but he delights in Acts of Mercy, and seems pleased with an honourable occasion to shew mercy, without exposing his Laws and Government to contempt: And therefore Repentance and Reformation will always appease him; nay sometimes we see, that the very shews and appearance of a publick and solemn Repentance, though it be not so sincere and hearty as it ought to be, makes him stay his hand, and expect our return. And this is a great encouragement, and a powerful obligation on us to return to God when he strikes, to humble our selves under his mighty hand, for there is no other way to remove his Judgments, and this will do it.

It is a vain thing to trust in Armies and Navies, in the Courage and Conduct of Princes and Generals, when our Sins fight against us, when God refuses to go forth with our Armies: for *no King is saved by the multitude of an host; a horse is a vain thing for safety, neither shall he deliver any by his great strength; but the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercies.* 33 Psal. 16, 17, 18.

Nay

Nay, the justice and righteousness of our Cause will not always secure us of Success; for those who have a very just Cause, may deserve to be punished; and then God may justly punish them, and deliver them into the hands of their Enemies: God does not always determine what is Right and Wrong by the events of War; for he is the Sovereign Judge of the World, and may punish a wicked Nation by unjust Oppressors, as he often did the *Israelites*.

The Profession of the true Religion will not always secure us, when our Sins cry for Vengeance: When the *Jews* cried, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*; the Prophet told them, *They trusted in lying words; for will ye steal, and murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsly, and burn incense to Baal, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?* 7. Jer. 4, ----10. To glory in the profession of the true Faith, or in a vigorous opposition to the Errors and Corruptions of Religion, when we are Atheists or Infidels in our Lives, may make God punish us, but is no reason on our part, why he should save us; but true and sincere Repentance will save us. We profess the sincere Faith of Christ, we fight in a just Cause, if it be lawful to defend our selves against the powerful Oppressor of the

Protestant, that is, the true Christian Faith, and the Liberties of *Europe*; and we have no reason to fear any thing but our sins: Let us but reform our Lives, and put away the evil of our doings, and our Arms will be as Prosperous, as our Cause is Just: God will then *gird our Princes and soldiers with strength to the battel; will teach their hands to war, and their fingers to fight.*

5*thly*. Faith and Prayer are more powerful than Arms; as it must necessarily be, if God only gives Victory and Success. This we learn from the whole History of the *Jews*; the Apostle to the *Hebrews* gives us a particular account of the Power of Faith, 11 *Heb.* 32, 33, 34. *Of Gideon, and Barach, and Sampson, and Jeptha, and David, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.* *Moses* his Prayer was more powerful than *Joshua*'s Arms; for *when Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed; when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed*, 17 Exod. 11. *Hezekiah*'s Prayer overthrew the *Assyrian* Army, when *Rabshekah* came against *Jerusalem*, and reproached them with their Trust in God. We must not indeed expect such miraculous Victories as God gave to *Israel*; but

this

this makes no difference; for the Power of Faith and Prayer is the same still; and all Victory is God's still, who gives Success as well by invisible Means, and seeming Accidents, as by the most visible interposal of a miraculous Power: For God gave *Israel* miraculous Deliverances; not because he could not save them without a Miracle, but because he would make it visible to all the world, That he was their Saviour. But still God hears our Prayers, and answers them; he is still the Saviour and Deliverer of all those who trust in him, and hope in his Mercy; and therefore the only sure way to conquer our Enemies, is to prevail with God by our fervent and importunate Prayers for a Blessing upon our Arms; to pray in Faith, in Hope, with an entire dependance on God, and a perfect Resignation to his Will: Thus *Gideon*, and *Barak*, and *David*, and the Worthies of old, subdued Kingdoms, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the Armies of Aliens; and there is no other way that I know of, still: If God be still the only Giver of Victory, Faith and Prayer is still the only way to obtain Victory from God; and therefore if we are cold and remiss in our Prayers; if we do not pray at all, or expect nothing from our Prayers, let us not charge any ill success to ill con-

duct or cowardize, but to our Infidelity and Irreligion; and indeed this is the only melancholly Consideration in our present Circumstances; if the Courage and Conduct of a Prince, if the Bravery and Resolution of Soldiers, if a Numerous Army and Navy, if an Arm of Flesh could give Victory, we have reason to hope well; but if God go not forth with our Armies, all our other Preparations are vain; and how can we expect that, when we will not ask it, or only mock God with some formal and customary addresses, without being concerned whether he hears or no; or without expecting, or at least without trusting and depending on his help?

6thly. But to encourage those good men, how few soever there are among us, who have a great sense of the Divine Providence, and a firm Trust and Faith in God, to be very importunate in their prayers for this Church and Nation, I observe farther, That God many times has spared a wicked people at the earnest intercessions of some few good men. Thus at the intercession of *Abraham*, God promised to have spared *Sodom*, had there been ten righteous persons found in that great City: God spared *Israel*, when they had so provok'd him by their Idolatries, that he threatned to destroy them, only at the importunity of *Moses*,

Moſes, as the Pſalmiſt obſerves; *therefore he ſaid, he would deſtroy them, had not Moſes his choſen ſtood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, leſt he ſhould deſtroy them*, 106 Pſalm 23. the Story of which we have, 32. *Exod.* 7, 8. at another time, when they had provoked God by their Idolatries and Whoredoms with the Daughters of *Moab*, and the Plague broke in among them, *then ſtood up Phineas and executed judgment, and the plague was ſtayed*, 25 *Numb.* And therefore when God declared his reſolution to puniſh them, he forbad his Prophet ſo much as to pray for them. 7. *Jer.* 16. And in 14. *Ezek.* 14. profeſſes, That he would not accept of any Interceſſions for them: *Tho theſe three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, yet they ſhall deliver but their own ſouls by their righteouſneſs, ſaith the Lord*: Which ſuppoſes, that at another time, the Interceſſions of theſe good men would have prevailed; and that it is very extraordinary for God to deny it.

And if the importunate Prayers of a few good men may obtain Victory and Succeſs, and ſave a Church and Nation; let every good man at this time cry mightily to God, eſpecially as the Prophet *Iſaiah* exhorts, *Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not ſilence, and give him no reſt, till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth*, 62. *Iſa.* 6, 7.

7thly. To

7thly. To add no more, and it is a very comfortable Consideration, God many times saved *Israel* for his own Names sake, when their sins provoked him to destroy them. 48. *Isa.* 9. *For my name sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for Thee, that I cut Thee not off.* 11. *v. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it; for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory to another.* Thus God assigns the reason, why he did not destroy *Israel* in the Wilderness, when they so highly provoked him, *I wrought for my name sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made my self known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt,* 20. *Ezek.* 9. That is, they were God's peculiar people, the only worshippers of the Lord *Jehovah*, whom he had brought out of *Egypt* by a mighty hand, to make his Name known in the world; and though they never so much deserved to be destroyed, had he then destroyed them, his own great Name would have suffered with them; as *Moses* pleaded with God; *Wherefore should the Egyptians say, For mischief did he bring them out to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?* 32. *Exod.* 12. And thus the Psalmist prays, *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us,*

and

and purge away our ſins for thy name ſake; wherefore ſhould the Heathen ſay, Where is their God? let him be known among the Heathen in our ſight, by revenging the blood of thy ſervants, which is ſhed, 79. Pſalm 9. 10.

And this is matter of hope to us, That tho our ſins are very great, yet God will not utterly deſtroy us; but will ſend deliverance for *his name ſake*; for the ſake of that holy Faith which is profeſſed among us; leſt our Antichriſtian Enemies ſhould triumph and ſay, *Where is now their God?* When the preſervation of a wicked people is for the defence and honour of the true Chriſtian Faith, we have reaſon to hope, and good men have a very powerful argument to plead with God, That *he will ſave us for his own Names ſake.*

FINIS.

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